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SPEECH OF SECRETARY ROOT AT THE
LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF
THE BUILDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF AMERICAN REPUBLICS, AT
WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 11, 1908.





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Mr. President and Gentlemen :

We are here to lay the corner stone of the building which is to be the home of the International Union of American Republics.

The wise liberality of the Congress of the United States has provided the means for the purchase of this tract of land—five acres in extent—near the White House and the great Executive Departments, bounded on every side by public streets and facing to the east and south upon public parks which it will always be the care of the National Government to render continually more beautiful in execution of its design to make the national capital an object of national pride and a source of that pleasure which comes to rich and poor alike from the education of taste.

The public spirit and enthusiasm for the good of humanity which have inspired an American citizen, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in his administration of a great fortune, have led him to devote the adequate and ample sum of three-quarters of a million dollars to the construction of the building.

Into the appropriate adornment and fitting of the edifice will go the contributions of every American Republic, already pledged and, in a great measure, already paid into the fund of the Union.

The International Union for which the building is erected is a voluntary association, the members of which are all the American nations from Cape Horn to the Great Lakes. It had its origin in the first Pan-American Conference held at Washington in 1889, and it has been developed and improved in efficiency under the resolutions of the succeeding conferences in Mexico and Brazil. Its primary object is to break down the barriers of mutual ignorance between the nations of America by collecting and making accessible, furnishing and spreading, information about every country among the people of every other country in the Union, to facilitate and stimulate intercourse, trade, acquaintance, good understanding, fellowship, and sympathy. For this purpose it has established in Washington a Bureau or Office under the direction of a Governing Board composed of the official representatives in Washington of all the Republics, and having a Director and Secretary, with a force of assistants and translators and clerks.

The Bureau has established a rapidly increasing library of history, travel, description, statistics, and literature of the American nations. It publishes a

Monthly Bulletin of current public events and existing conditions in all the united countries, which is circulated in every country. It carries on an enormous correspondence with every part of both continents, answering the questions of seekers for information about the laws, customs, conditions, opportunities, and personnel of the different countries; and it has become a medium of introduction and guidance for international intercourse.

The Governing Board is also a permanent committee charged with the duty of seeing that the resolutions of each Pan-American Conference are carried out and that suitable preparation is made for the next succeeding conference.

The increasing work of the Bureau has greatly outgrown the facilities of its cramped quarters on Pennsylvania avenue, and now at the close of its second decade and under the influence of the great movement of awakened sympathy between the American Republics, the Union stands upon the threshold of more ample opportunity for the prosecution of its beneficent activity.

Many noble and beautiful public buildings record the achievements and illustrate the impulses of modern civilization. Temples of religion, of patriotism, of learning, of art, of justice abound; but this structure will stand alone, the first of its

kind—a temple dedicated to international friendship. It will be devoted to the diffusion of that international knowledge which dispels national prejudice and liberalizes national judgment. Here will be fostered the growth of that sympathy born of similarity in good impulses and noble purposes, which draws men of different races and countries together into a community of nations, and counteracts the tendency of selfish instincts to array nations against each other as enemies. From this source shall spring mutual helpfulness between all the American Republics, so that the best knowledge and experience and courage and hope of every Republic shall lend moral power to sustain and strengthen every other in its struggle to work out its problems and to advance the standard of liberty and peace with justice within itself, and so that no people in all of these continents, however oppressed and discouraged, however impoverished and torn by disorder, shall fail to feel that they are not alone in the world, or shall fail to see that for them a better day may dawn, as for others the sun has already risen.

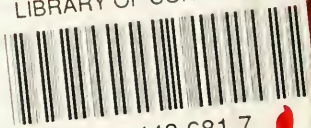
It is too much to expect that there will not be controversies between American nations to whose desire for harmony we now bear witness; but to every controversy will apply the truth that there are no international controversies so serious that

they can not be settled peaceably if both parties really desire peaceable settlement, while there are few causes of dispute so trifling that they can not be made the occasion of war if either party really desires war. The matters in dispute between nations are nothing; the spirit which deals with them is everything.

The graceful courtesy of the twenty Republics who have agreed upon the capital of the United States for the home of this International Union, the deep appreciation of that courtesy shown by the American Government and this representative American citizen, and the work to be done within the walls that are to rise on this site, can not fail to be powerful influences towards the creation of a spirit that will solve all disputed questions of the future and preserve the peace of the Western World.

May the structure now begun stand for many generations to come as the visible evidence of mutual respect, esteem, appreciation, and kindly feeling between the peoples of all the Republics; may pleasant memories of hospitality and friendship gather about it, and may all the Americas come to feel that for them this place is home, for it is theirs, the product of a common effort and the instrument of a common purpose.

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